THEOSOPHY

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Unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious, showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore, becomes essentially RELIGION, *and must be called in its integrity and universality by the distinctive name of* WISDOM-RELIGION.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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AUM

Where there is doubt, the flower of faith will not open.
—*Nagarjuna*

THEOSOPHY

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THE MEASURE OF THE WORK

IN the *Path* for December, 1890, fifteen years after the founding of the Theosophical Society, Mr. Judge gave an account of what seemed the progress achieved. While the Society and its branches and publications had their importance, he looked elsewhere for indication of the value of the work:

> It is to be measured by the thoughts of men. What are they now? They are full of the great doctrines the Adepts said should be taught once more, drawn from Brahmanism and Buddhism, —Karma and Reincarnation; with all the other doctrines brought forward prominently to the Occident. It was once impossible to find three men in New York or London who knew the word theosophy. Now the Reviews print articles upon it, people in drawing rooms speak of it, the clerk, the merchant, and the professor read of it. But surer sign than all, though sadder than any, is the adoption of terms found in Theosophical literature by men who design thereby to gain a living or get fame. They could not do this with that which was unfashionable, unfamiliar, or repulsive. Next comes literature in general. It is full of words so long used by our members. The greatest publishers do not fear to print books ground out by writers whose knowledge of Theosophy is derived from its popularity. They are sure barometers. They indicate an area of pressure or of high expansion. . . . The Theosophical Society for many years years has been giving out theosophical ideas and language, and now the whole world is using them.

A little more than five years later, shortly before his death, in the *Path* for February, 1896, Mr. Judge returned to this theme,

recalling an encouragement by H.P.B.

> In 1888 I had a morning conversation with H.P.B. at the Lansdowne Road house in London, upon the spread or weight of the Theosophical movement. I said that it was sometimes appalling to remember the millions of people in America alone, in comparison with the few Theosophists and Theosophical branches: what hope was there of making a change in national character in any land? Her reply was that, while it might seem discouraging looked at in that way, it was really not so. "Look," she said, "at our beginnings in 1875, when no one knew of Theosophy, and only jokes greeted our amazing efforts for publicity. But now we have come into the papers and magazines. We have made a distinct impression on the mind and literature of the time. This is much to have done."

Commenting, Mr. Judge chose curious examples of this influence, showing that he regarded even light-hearted reference to Theosophical ideas as not without value:

> There are two recent conspicuous instances. The N.Y. *Herald,* in December last, had an article in which this occurs:
>
> "No man on the globe knows how to keep a hotel as the American does. He is a perfect *Mahatma* at the business."
>
> Here is this great word abused, it is true; but that does not damage it. It has reached in less than twenty years the familiar treatment which it took in India centuries to come to. There they often use it as a term of reproach, on the principle that to call a man that high and great thing which he cannot be is to abuse him.
>
> Again, in the *Cosmopolitan* for December last—a magazine widely read—there is a story by Zangwill called "Choice of Parents," on the abolition of compulsory reincarnation. The sketch deals entirely with the ante-natal world and reincarnation on earth. Not long before the author had something in the English *Pall Mall Magazine* wherein Theosophy, Theosophists and reincarnation were mentioned. I do not know who will have the hardihood to deny the great share the Theosophical movement has had in bringing about this change.

Mr. Judge overlooked no opportunity to encourage workers and students in their tasks. Here, you could say, he was not identifying some great step of moral or philosophical progress, but pointing to the addition of Theosophical themes to the "association network" of the modern mind. The terms of Theosophy, in other words, were becoming part of the resources of the mind of the race. They were becoming "acceptable," instead of being casually

ignored. Behind these terms were (and are) powerful ideas which now had free access to minds ready to give them consideration. The intellectual framework of the age was undergoing change—a change for the good, even though immediate consequences of importance could not be discerned. Yet Mr. Judge, while calling attention to these signs, expressed no unwarranted optimism. "We have no hope of changing human nature now," he said, "and knowing its tendency to materiality, we would never have brought out this Magazine did we not have supreme faith in those Beings and forces controlling the destiny of nations and individuals, well knowing that They will see that these efforts, made for the cause of humanity, shall not be devoid of fruit." (*Path,* March, 1889.)

Then, at the end of the first five years of publication of the *Path* (April, 1891), he said it was too soon to "feel satisfaction" with what had been accomplished, adding:

> In the course of a few centuries and in other lives, it will be possible to find out just what influence the PATH has exerted. Just now we must content ourselves with offering thanks to those who with pen or money have assisted this most obscure journal, and to direct their attention to the new American theosophical year. . . .

Occasionally, Mr. Judge would administer a kind of "shock" to his readers, as for example in the opening editorial of the seventh year of the *Path*, which he ended by saying:

> Once more, too, the editor declares he sees no excuse for the existence of this or any other magazine. He wearies of the eternal printing that goes on, for there is nothing new under the sun and we are like squirrels repeating the words spoken by bodies long since dead which were inhabited by ourselves whom we now fail to recognize. But since this is the age of black on white impressed by machinery, we are compelled to publish so that the opportunity of saying the same thing once more to a rebellious and stiff-necked generation shall not be neglected.

Not remarkably, this declaration elicited anxiety that the *Path* was coming to an end. He replied in the June, 1892, isue:

> There is no intention of stopping this Magazine; indeed, if Theosophists patronized the PATH more, it would be enlarged to twice its present size. What was stated was, that the Editor thinks it impossible to say anything new, and all that can be said was published centuries ago by the ancients. He also holds

> that nowadays there is a thirst for more, more, articles, all repeating the old ideas while they pretend to be giving out original thoughts. Why not read and re-read the thoughts as given? And the reply is that it is not pleasant to take so much trouble; besides, the modern method is not the same; and, above all, we are lazy of mind as well as superficial, therefore there must be constant re-statement. Give out the doctrines found in the *Upanishads* in the old form and they are scouted, but rewrite them with a modern title and it will be considered. Hence, while seeing no excuse for the existence of any magazine, the Editor is forced by circumstances to continue publication of his own, however faulty it may be.

Like H.P.B., Mr. Judge "dealt with the mind of the race" as he found it, going more than half way to meet its wonderings and questions, yet always avoiding the dilutions which turn into compromise, finding ways to say in simple language what the world needed to think about. Yet behind this beneficent work with the thought of the age he had one constant purpose. He said in a letter to a friend:

> What a petty lot of matter we spend time on, when so much is transitory. After a hundred years what will be the use of all this? Better that a hundred years hence a principle of freedom and an impulse of work should have been established. The small errors of a life are nothing, but the general sum of thought is much. . . . I care everything for the unsectarianism that H.P.B. died to start. . . .

There seems a sense in which, in many of his counsels to Theosophical workers, Mr. Judge was endeavoring only to convey an attitude of mind—to develop in students the capacity for unceasing labors pursued with patience, and without the need for seeing tangible results. What he said to one correspondent applied with equal validity to the movement and, more generally, to the race as a whole:

> As it will take many a life for one to overcome the personal nature, there is no good in imagining what things and thoughts would then be like. It is certain that, in the long journey, the whole nature changing, it is adjusted to all conditions. Many of those matters which we call the woes of others are really nothing at all, and only "skin deep"; the real woe of the race is not that.

In the same vein is his counsel to another who had asked about the "mental woe unspeakable" suffered by high Adepts. There was

need, he said, for better understanding of the present condition of the mind of the race:

> You must always remember, when reading such things, that terms must be used that the reader will understand. Hence, speaking thus, it must be said that there are such cycles of woe —from our standpoint—just as the fact that I have no amusements, and nothing but work in the T.S., seems a great penance to those who like their pleasures. I, on the contrary, take pleasure and peace in the "self-denial," as they call it. Therefore, it must follow that he who enters the secret Path finds his peace and pleasure in endless work for Humanity. But, of course, with his added sight and knowledge, he must always be seeing the self-inflicted miseries of men. The mistake you make is to give the person thus "sacrificed" the same small qualities and longings as we now have, whereas the wider sweep and power of soul make what we call sacrifice and woe seem something different. Is not this clear, then? If it were stated otherwise than as the *Voice* has it, you would find many making the vow, and then breaking it; but he who makes the vow with the full idea of its misery will keep it.

This seems indeed the insight of one who has "overcome the personal nature," transmitting the wisdom of those who are "the bearers of the torch of truth across the ages"—who "have stood by the cradle of nations and seen the vast achievements of the ancients, watched sadly the decay of those who had no power to resist the cyclic law of rise and fall," and who "continually seek for opportunities of drawing the developing intelligence of the race to consider the great truths concerning the destiny of the soul."

"Progress," in such wise eyes, is not measured by standards which prevail in the world, nor is the common conception of decline and failure the same as theirs. H.P.B. speaks of these illusions in "The Fall of Ideals," pointing out that external conditions are seldom a measure of the actual progress which proceeds on inner planes, and declaring that despite "the present condition of the moral world, and the sorry *debris* of the best human ideals," the ideal of human perfection is *no dream*, but "a law of divine nature." Even if "had Mankind to wait even millions of years, still it must some day reach it and rebecome *a race of gods.*"

So it is that the Teachers of Theosophy ever caution against looking for immediate "results," and attempting to measure the fruits of Theosophical work by the standards of worldly concep-

tions of progress. We cannot *see* the true results, and it may be centuries, as Mr. Judge suggested, before they will become evident on the outward plane. And even then, the precipitating causes may seem on the surface to be the most discouraging of all. As H.P.B. wrote in "The Fall of Ideals":

> Meanwhile, the periodical rise and fall of human character on the external planes takes place now, as it did before, and the ordinary average perception of man is too weak to see that both processes occur each time on a higher plane than the preceding. But as such changes are not always the work of centuries, for often extreme changes are wrought by swift acting forces—*e.g.* by wars, speculations, epidemics, the devastation of famines or religious fanaticism—therefore, do the blind masses imagine that man was, is, and will be the same. And yet, both move in space and time with an equal velocity, around themselves and—*onward.*

By such means both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge sought to inspire workers for Theosophy with a spirit of constancy, giving to those who had yet a long way to go in overcoming the personal nature a vision of how the world and its vast assemblage of souls are regarded by those able to look into the principles of things.

"THE GITA"—INFORMAL ESSAYS

IV

CHAPTER third makes that unequivocal judgment on the comparative values of "action" and "inaction" which is typical of the whole *Bhagavad-Gita.* "Do thou perform the proper actions. Action is superior to inaction. The journey of thy mortal frame cannot be accomplished by inaction."

We are all familiar with the counsel, "When in doubt, abstain," and there is sure value in the counsel. There are times when our precipitate action is nothing more than a prideful refusal to admit that we don't quite know what is the best thing to do. This sort of pride can be particularly harmful, too, for precipitate actions often bring about unnecessary complications in the lives of others, causing untimely suffering. It might be that much of religion has been built upon a recognition of this fact. The counsels of specific creeds and rules may serve as partially beneficent restraints on actions which would otherwise be too impulsive for good. But here, as in so many other instances, the basic orientation of the *Gita* is directed against the over-simplifications of conventional religions, whether they be the Vedas, the Ten Commandments or the accepted "rules" of any society. Caution, by itself, is not a virtue, since in isolation it is transformed into slothfulness, indifference and cowardice. Only the man who has developed the capacity to act decisively will know what to do with the virtue of caution, for he combines its mediating influence with the capacity to fill the Kshatriya role. The message of Krishna is to all human beings who tend to gravitate, by natural impulse, from adolescence in youth to the often superficial conservatism of middle and old age. The *warrior soul* must retain its warrior qualities and not lapse into a life directed at the attainment of security. And, as such, the *Gita* is not for those who prefer the heaven of religion, but only for those who are determined to battle through its half-truths to a recognition of man's active rather than passive destiny.

NOTE.—This is the fourth of a series of articles which were originally printed in THEOSOPHY, Volumes 38 and 39.

A sometimes perceptive Christian, Pascal, once wrote that "if one were to do nothing except for a certainty, one would do nothing for religion, for it is not certain." The healthy disregard of complete security implied in this sentence accounts, perhaps, for Pascal's measure as a man against the background of tradition, which always stultifies innovation. And it has been elsewhere remarked that if one waits for a certainty he will "sit and wait in his armchair forever." Krishna helps Arjuna to see that he is between the horns of a dilemma, both tips of which turn around to point in the same direction: "The very principles of thy nature will compel thee to engage in action," says the teacher, and therefore he says in effect, *"why not act as the divine being you may become, by grasping the reins of the chariot and guiding the horses*—before you are pulled into motion inadvertently?"

Much of human suffering is very certainly of that prolonged variety which accompanies indecision. Why do we suffer from indecision? The primary cause must be that persistently, over a considerable time space, we are bound down by the necessity of recognizing our own inadequacy. Our failures to be what we might be are never so apparent as during such a time. Probably, then, as has been suggested, the past karma of many men would tell the story of a developed habit of escaping from the torments of indecision by turning over the power of decision to someone else. Whether this be one's parent or spouse, one's priest, one's physician or one's psychiatrist, the result is psychologically aways the same. There is not an easy way to get rid of indecision, for there will always be areas of our lives which our parent, priest, physician or psychiatrist has no rule for. Then we will face the same "torment" again, weaker rather than stronger because of the role others have played in directing our lives, while the indecision will last a greater time in proportion to this weakness.

The philosophical over-simplifications of the problem are much less dangerous, therefore, than authoritarian ones. A typical philosophical over-simplification is to say "one need never suffer if one has the right attitude." This is perfectly true, but seldom sufficiently useful when the well-being of others, their likes and dislikes and needs are ultimately involved in the decision we have to make. In the *Gita* it is not the religious teacher who over-simplifies, we will note, but rather his easy-way-out pupil, Arjuna. Arjuna excuses himself from action by calling attention to the many people who

will be hurt by his continued decision to fight out the field. "Well," Krishna replies, in effect, "choose this if you must, Arjuna, but do not so choose and still call yourself Kshatriya; one cannot sit back and go forward simultaneously."

As a corollary to the *Gita's* emphasis that "action" is superior to "inaction," it is interesting to note absence of all the various altruistic precepts associated with the golden rule. We may recall that Mr. Judge, in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, makes a distinction between the nature of Krishna's function as an instructor and that of Buddha and Jesus. Why is it that Krishna says so little about the need for devoting oneself to the welfare of others? Why does he not talk about the "realization of universal brotherhood"?

The only implications of brotherhood in the *Gita* are apparently metaphysical. When Krishna speaks of himself in the first person singular he is usually, as Mr. Judge points out, referring to himself as one whose spiritual nature is identified with the spiritual nature of all. But this is a subtle way of calling attention to the first fundamental of Theosophical philosophy. The Theosophical Society used the phrase "universal brotherhood" as a keynote of its platform. And the *Dhammapada*, while indicating that Buddha provided many more ethical precepts than Krishna, also is primarily an appeal to the individual. If, however, Buddha's and Krishna's teachings stress the need for individual salvation through self-discipline and action, and if Jesus' doctrines were primarily directed at awakening a sense of universal brotherhood, we might expect the East to be more individualistic and the West more brotherly. As we know, the reverse is the case. Not only does Western history bring us an unparalleled account of ceaseless wars, but the religious tradition growing up around Christianity has always stressed "private, individual salvation." And in the West, how many more have been content to "move toward heaven" as a member of a group without giving too much attention to personal status.

Perhaps the only thing we can conclude from this sort of paradox is that the various races and groups of men need a particular sort of admonition at a particular time of their cycle, and that *the teachings most needed are the ones least likely to take root.* This is what may be called the perverse side of the story of the Theosophical endeavor. Groups, like individuals, will probably always tend to resist most strongly an understanding of the very truths their lives require for

clarity and purpose. At least, in the Theosophical Movement of the present era, it is possible to make a universal rather than a regional or racial appeal. In the writings of H. P. Blavatsky one discovers vital encouragement to becoming a Kshatriya, and also much that compels Buddhi-Manas to recognize the interdependence of all beings.

It is, of course, characteristic of the *Gita* that no systematic treatments are given of any subject, even though the chapter headings may indicate that such is to be the case. In the *Gita*, as in H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, we shall see that the points made on any subject of central philosophical importance are scattered throughout the text. (In this case, the simplest explanation is probably the truest and most natural, for the problems of philosophy and psychology do not come up in a systematized fashion in the lives of human beings, but are rather organic to some complicated situation, which itself implicates numerous key matters of doctrine or persuasion.)

So, if we look to the *Gita* for a dissertation devoted exclusively to "the freedom of the will," we shall not be particularly rewarded, although we may discover in many of the *Gita's* chapters an impetus to *thinking* about this over-formalized question. The whole of Chapter Two, in one sense, is an expression of Krishna's conviction that the soul of man, though commonly involved in a network of destiny, *may rise to choose*, may select an idea or a line of action above and beyond the line of least resistance. In Chapter Three, also, are a few brief statements which merit prolonged pondering. "Devotion," says Krishna, "must be performed through the right performance of action," or, in other words, through choices exercised in situations wherein one's instincts are seen to reveal the highest truth or rightness.

Then Krishna says a very curious thing: "All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action." Reading "the Supreme Spirit of all Selves" for "God"—as the general *Gita* context makes clear must be done—we shall probably conclude that very few human beings devote their actions *only* to this Spirit, and therefore that nearly all are "bound by action." Being "bound by action," in turn, must mean to be left *without alternatives* in many situations. On this view, how many are literally without the present capacity or opportunity to exercise any fully

free choices! Krishna declares:

> All actions are effected by the qualities of nature. The man deluded by ignorance thinks, "I am the actor." But he, O strong armed one! who is acquainted with the nature of the two distinctions of cause and effect, knowing that the qualities act only in the qualities, and that the Self is distinct from them, is not attached in action. . . .
>
> Throwing every deed on me, and with thy meditation fixed upon the Higher Self, resolve to fight, without expectation, devoid of egotism and free from anguish.

To "resolve" is not to conquer, but only to begin to wish to conquer. Separating oneself from habits based on varied degrees of delusion is no easy matter. "Freedom," then, is only *theoretically* within reach. In contra-distinction to current scientific opinion and religion, Theosophy and the summation of Krishna's words are an affirmation of Free Will in man. But this is the doctrine of the *secret promise of freedom*, not the doctrine of its present, unqualified existence. It may even be that the actual free choices made by any given individual in any one life-time are few and far between.

Even Arjuna, the "*best* of the Bharatas," is with great difficulty sufficiently inspired by a Great Teacher to free himself from allowing his actions to be any more than conditioned reflexes to traditional modes of behavior.

How many *real choices* do we make in our own lives? Will not the man who has learned to be honest with himself admit that many of his apparent decisions and choices were pre-determined? Do there not almost always seem to be such strong lines of preferences or inclination within us that the debate presumably surrounding a "decision" is mere fanfare? Can we not say that most decisions are determined long before they are announced to the world, and that the interim is apt to be one devoted to finding expedient arguments and phrases to explain a course finally adopted? Perhaps this is what "bound by action" really means, in the terms of psychology.

It is seldom the larger and more spectacular choices which actually do call the power of free will into use. Nearly always, on major issues, there seem to be lines of mental influence so strong that their triumph is inevitable. For instance, men may profess a noble ethic, intellectually believe in its "truth" or its metaphysical rightness,

and yet go through an entire life-time without "devoting" a single *action* towards an alteration of behavior on behalf of the ideal.

The Theosophical argument for the existence of free will in man is simply the expression of the conviction that there are times, in the lives of all, when the old lines of influence from the past and the new lines of influence of the present imbue our psychic and mental natures equally and simultaneously. "Conditioning," then, can move us neither one way nor the other. The irresistible force has met the immovable object, and the Ego does have to choose.

What small and insignificant occasions these must often seem to be! Sometimes men have awakened in later years to a realization of the immense implications of some true decision made earlier in life, concerning, possibly, a thing so subtle as to seem irrelevant to the broad issues of a man's future. Yet selection of a wife and mother of children, the company he shall work for, or the trade or profession he will follow may all in turn have been profoundly modified or "conditioned" by this one free choice in the past. This, perhaps, is why moralists are so repetitive in their insistence that we consider "the small things" to be important. The moralists may not have the philosophical and psychological basis to explain just how small things relate to big things,—may, in fact, not believe in free choice at all, but only in propitiation of their God—but there is a distinct recognition even among religionists that we gradually prepare ourselves for great good or great evil by devotion to the small right or wrong. The reason that the large decisions are so seldom free is because they usually involve complex situations rather than simple ones; in such instances the attainment of an even balance of desires is almost impossible. Yet only when that even balance *is struck* can there be free choice in the full sense.

We may, if we choose, relate the whole question of free will to the religious or moral disciplines of self-restraint. Krishna once asked the rhetorical question, "What will restraint effect," since "all creatures act according to their natures." Restraint, of itself, never can nor will accomplish a transformation of motivation. The "restraint" of all but the most discerning ascetics is apt to give an illusory sense of mastery over "desires"—desires which will later re-assert themselves in new and less-planned-for situations. For instance, there is really only one identification of Self with objects of sense, but innumerable ways and means of exploiting the senses. Men sometimes feel they have purged themselves of the evil of

sensualism after restraining but a single channel of their essential appetites. And in such instances, whatever basis one *thinks* he is choosing from, choices will still be made on the basis of the predominant impulses of the past, clothed in new form.

The moments of genuine free will must come most frequently to those who face themselves honestly, appraise their actual dominant motivations and try to understand them.

Perhaps it could be thought that the study and profession of philosophy is of subsidiary importance if so few choices will *be* real choices no matter how much philosophy we study nor how much we might wish the fact to be otherwise. Yet the only alteration of karmic lines comes through Manas. We are able to stand at the crossroads of free choice only when and because the mind has been pioneering the possibilities of new ways of action.

The Perception of Spirit

Allied to the physical half of man's nature is reason, which enables him to maintain his supremacy over the lower animals, and to subjugate nature to his uses. Allied to his spiritual part is his *conscience*, which will serve as his unerring guide through the besetments of the senses; for conscience is that instantaneous perception between right and wrong, which can only be exercised by spirit, which, being a portion of the Divine Wisdom and Purity, is absolutely pure and wise. Its promptings are independent of reason, and it can only manifest itself clearly, when unhampered by the baser attractions of our dual nature.

—*Isis Unveiled*

THE ELEMENTS

METAPHYSICALLY and esoterically there is but One ELEMENT in nature, and at the root of it is the Deity; and the so-called *seven* elements are the garment, *the veil, of that deity;* direct from the essence whereof comes MAN, whether physically, psychically, mentally or spiritually considered. Four elements only are generally spoken of in later antiquity, five admitted only in philosophy. For the body of ether is not fully manifested yet, and its noumenon is still "the Omnipotent Father—Æther, the synthesis of the rest." But what are these "ELEMENTS" whose compound bodies have now been discovered by Chemistry and Physics to contain numberless sub-elements, even the sixty or seventy of which no longer embrace the whole number suspected.

The four Elements were fully characterized by Plato when he said that they were *that* "which *composes* and *decomposes* the *compound bodies*." Fire, Air, Water, Earth, were but the visible garb, the symbols of the informing, invisible Souls or Spirits—the Cosmic gods to whom worship was offered by the ignorant, and simple, respectful recognition by the wiser. In their turn the *phenomenal* subdivisions of the noumenal Elements were informed by the Elements, so called, the "Nature Spirits" of lower grades. The ancients knew and could distinguish the *corporeal* from the *spiritual* elements, in the forces of nature. The Dhyanis of the Seven Heavens (the seven planes of Being) are the NUMENOI of the actual and the future Elements, just as the Angels of the Seven Powers of nature—the grosser effects of which are perceived by us in what Science is pleased to call the "modes of motion"—the imponderable forces and what not—are the still higher noumenoi of still higher Hierarchies.

Primordial matter, before it emerges from the plane of the never-manifesting, is but "a cool Radiance, colourless, formless, tasteless, and devoid of every quality and aspect." Even such are her first-born, the "four sons," who "are One, and become Seven," . . . . Imagine the dawn of a new manvantara. The pure "silver" of the absorbed material will once more separate into *substance*, which will generate "Divine Essences" whose "principles" are the primary

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NOTE.—A student collation from THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

elements, the sub-elements, the physical energies and subjective and objective matter;—the entities, by whose qualifications and names the ancient Eastern Occultists called the four of the seven primal "centers of Forces," or atoms, that develop later into the great Cosmic "Elements," now divided into the seventy or so sub-elements, known to science.

Every Cosmical Element such as Fire, Air, Water, Earth, partaking of the qualities and defects of their Primaries, are in their nature Good and Evil, Force (or Spirit) and Matter, etc., etc.; and each, therefore, is at one and the same time Life and Death, Health and Disease, Action and Reaction. They are ever and constantly forming matter under the never-ceasing impulse of the ONE Element (the *incognizable*), represented in the world of phenomena by Æther, or "the immortal gods who give birth and life to all."

The succession of primary aspects of Nature with which the succession of Rounds is concerned, has to do with the development of the "Elements" (in the Occult sense)—Fire, Air, Water, Earth. We are only in the fourth Round, and our catalogue so far stops short. The centres of consciousness (destined to develop into humanity as we know it) of the third Round arrived at a perception of the third Element Water. Those of the fourth Round have added *earth* as a state of matter to their stock as well as the three other elements in their present transformation. In short, none of the so-called elements were, in the three preceding Rounds, as they are now. For all we know FIRE may have been *pure* AKASA, the first Matter . . . AIR, simply Nitrogen, "the breath of the Supporters of the Heavenly Dome," as the Mahometan mystics call it; WATER, that primordial fluid which was required, according to Moses to make *a living soul* with.

Every new Round develops one of the Compound Elements, as now known to Science,—which rejects the primitive nomenclature, preferring to subdivide them into constituents. If Nature is the "Ever-becoming" on the manifested plane, then those Elements are to be regarded in the same light: they have to evolve, progress, and increase to the Manvantaric end.

For clearer understanding, it must be stated that Occult Science recognizes *Seven* Cosmical Elements—four entirely physical, and the fifth (Ether) semi-material, as it will become visible in the air towards the end of our Fourth Round, to reign supreme over the

others during the whole of the Fifth. The remaining two are as yet absolutely beyond the range of human perception. These latter will, however, appear as presentments during the 6th and 7th races of this Round, and will become known in the 6th and 7th Rounds respectively. These seven elements with their numberless Sub-Elements (far more numerous than those known to Science) are simply *conditional* modifications and aspects of the ONE and only Element.

Let it be remembered that Fire, Water, and Air, or the "Elements of primary Creation" so-called, are not the compound Elements they are on Earth, but noumenal homogeneous Elements—the Spirits thereof. Then follow the septenary groups or hosts. Placed on parallel lines in a diagram with Atoms, the Natures of those Beings would be seen to correspond in their downward scale of progression to composite elements in a mathematically identical manner, as to analogy. This refers, of course, only to diagrams made by the Occultists; for were the scale of Angelic Beings to be placed on a parallel line with the scale of the chemical atoms of Science—from the hypothetical Helium down to Uranium—they would of course be found to differ. In Esoteric Philosophy, every physical particle corresponds to and depends on its higher *noumenon*—the Being to whose essence it belongs; and above as below, the Spiritual evolves from the Divine, the psycho-mental from the Spiritual—tainted from its lower plane by the astral—the whole animate and (seemingly) inanimate Nature evolving on parallel lines, and drawing its attributes from above as well as from below.

Of all the Elements known to physical science, Fire is the one that has ever eluded definite analysis. It is confidently asserted that Air is a mixture containing the gases Oxygen and Nitrogen. We view the Universe and the Earth as matter composed of definite chemical molecules. We speak of the primitive ten Earths, endowing each with a Greek or Latin name. We say that water, is chemically, a compound of Oxygen and Hydrogen. But what is FIRE? It is the effect of combustion, we are gravely answered. It is heat and light and motion, and a correlation of physical and chemical forces in general.

What says the esoteric teaching with regard to fire? "Fire," it says, "is the most perfect and unadulterated reflection, in Heaven as on Earth, of the ONE FLAME. It is divine 'SUBSTANCE'."

It is in strict analogy with ITS attributes in both the spiritual

and material worlds, that the evolution of the Dhyan Chohanic Essences takes place; the characteristics of the latter being reflected, in their turn, in *Man*, collectively, and in each of his principles; *every one of which contains in itself, in the same progressive order, a portion of their various "fires" and elements.*

Man is composed of all the Great Elements; Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Ether—the ELEMENTALS which belong respectively to these Elements feel attracted to man by reason of their co-essence. That element which predominates in a certain constitution will be the ruling element throughout life.

HELPING HUMANITY

The Path of theosophical movement is to be entered *for all,* not for self. To do so places the student *in the position* to use his knowledge—whether his stock seems great or small—for the benefit of humanity. Nor does this imply a vague, sentimental desire; it is a matter for *will-action.* Humanity must be actively helped, not once or twice, in some extraordinary and grandiloquent way, but daily and hourly, immediately, everywhere, *now.* Humanity is not a vast multitude which, in some incomprehensible fashion, is presented for *us* to "save"; humanity is our fellowman, whom we are meeting from moment to moment in our days and years. Humanity is every single individual in the reach and range of our thought, will, and feeling. How can we *not* serve humanity? For if we serve not "the least of these," we must perforce have disserved.

letters • questions • comment

Judging from all the trials, obstacles, and hazards which are said to beset the path of human development, it sometimes appears that the very laws of nature are set against the evolutionary process. Why should this be? One would think that a beneficent rule of law would give support instead of being so forbidding.

The question is a natural one, and the answer, if one can be found, lies in the secret of the duality of man. Ultimately, the answer to so fundamental an inquiry must depend upon self-knowledge—an answer it is necessary to *feel* as much or more than to reason about. Man's nature is both time-bound and eternal. The two aspects of reality in man are held in inseparable embrace by the primordial desire which brought the whole universe into being. This desire, also, has two aspects. There is the longing to be, to have existence, emerging in our present lives as *Tanha*—"clinging to life on this earth"—as an expression of the great centrifugal tendency throughout the universe, but there is also the first feeling of "infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE." A third aspect of this primordial desire, which connects Entity with Non-Entity, or Manas with Atma, is explained, H.P.B. says (*S.D.* I, 416-17), "as *the desire to learn and acquire knowledge*—to KNOW," and she adds: "This is the natural sequence of mental evolution, the spiritual becoming transmuted into the material or physical."

We might say, then, that the opportunity for evolution and growth results from the universal manifesting tendency, since "it is only through a vehicle of matter that consciousness wells up as 'I am I,' a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal Mind at a certain stage of complexity," while the reverse of this process—the transmutation of the material or physical into the spiritual—is the means of evolutionary fulfillment. Man is the

laboratory in which both these transformations take place. As put in *The Secret Doctrine*: "It is only by the attractive force of the contrasts that the two opposites—Spirit and Matter—can be cemented on Earth, and, smelted in the fire of self-conscious experience and suffering, find themselves wedded in Eternity." (II, 103.)

This suggests a meaning for divinity—a conscious fusion of spirit and matter, with spirit the ruling principle, resulting in a quality of being which is beyond the opposites of spirit and matter, since the two are "wedded in Eternity." Spirit, left to itself, so to speak, is passive and quiescent. As H.P.B. says, "It is owing to this rebellion of intellectual life against the morbid inactivity of pure spirit, that we are what we are—self-conscious, thinking men, with the capabilities and attributes of Gods in us, for good as much as for evil." If the God aspect becomes uppermost, then divinity is achieved. "The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet," says *The Voice of the Silence*. "One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both." This is to say that the principle of unity must prevail over the principle of separateness. But during the process of evolution, man is "an equilibrized compound of Spirit and Matter, of the positive and the negative, of the male and the female." (*S.D.* II, 84.) Elsewhere (II, 180) this is put more explicitly:

> On the descending arc it is the spiritual which is gradually transformed into the material. On the middle line of the base, Spirit and matter are equilibrized in Man. On the ascending arc, Spirit is slowly re-asserting itself at the expense of the physical, or matter, so that, at the close of the seventh Race of the Seventh Round, the Monad will find itself as free from matter and all its qualities as it was in the beginning; having gained in addition the experience and wisdom, the fruition of all its personal lives, without their evil and temptations.

The "equilibrium" spoken of, then, may be conceived in two ways. There is the equilibrium of the original Substance-Principle, of which H.P.B. says:

> The Universe is the periodical manifestation of this unknown Absolute Essence. To call it "essence," however, is to sin against the very spirit of the philosophy. For though the noun may be derived in this case from the verb *esse*, "to be," yet IT cannot be identified with a *being* of any kind, that can be conceived by human intellect. IT is best described as neither Spirit nor matter, but both. (I, 273.)

The other equilibrium is that achieved in manifestation—an unstable equilibrium, one might say, since its balances are continually changing with the progress of evolution. The type or "symbol" of this equilibrium is the Monad, yet here a paradox is involved; as H.P.B. explains:

> For the Monad or Jiva *per se* cannot be even called spirit: it is a ray, a breath of the ABSOLUTE, or the Absoluteness rather, having no relations with the conditioned and relative finiteness, is unconscious on our plane. Therefore, besides the material which will be needed for its future human form, the monad requires (*a*) a spiritual model, or prototype, for that material to shape itself into; and (*b*) an intelligent consciousness to guide its evolution and progress, neither of which is possessed by the homogeneous monad, or by senseless though living matter. . . . It is only when, from a potential androgyne, man has become separated into male and female, that he will be endowed with this conscious, rational individual Soul, (*Manas*) . . . to receive which he has to eat of the fruit of Knowledge from the Tree of Good and Evil.
>
> In the Sankhya philosophy, Purusha (spirit) is spoken of as something impotent unless he mounts on the shoulders of Prakriti (matter), which, left alone, is—senseless. But in the secret philosophy they are viewed as graduated. Though one and the same thing in their origin, Spirit and Matter, when once they are on the plane of differentiation, begin each of them their evolutionary progress in contrary directions—Spirit falling gradually into matter, and the latter ascending to its original condition, that of a pure spiritual substance. Both are inseparable, yet ever separated. In polarity, on the physical plane, two like poles will always repel each other, while the negative and the positive are mutually attracted, so do Spirit and Matter stand to each other—the two poles of the same homogeneous substance, the root-principle of the universe. (I, 247.)

The regaining of the primordial unity comes about through the struggle of spirit, through mind, to know itself, thus reconciling the centrifugal and centripetal tendencies of all life. This is the labor of an entire Manvantara and is not accomplished without supreme effort.

THOUGHTS ON THEOSOPHY

"THE letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," this is the keynote of all true reform. Theosophy is the vehicle of the spirit that gives life, consequently nothing *dogmatic* can be truly *theosophical.*

It is incorrect, therefore, to describe a *mere* unearthing of dead letter dogma as "Theosophic work."

When a word, phrase, or symbol, having been once used for the purpose of suggesting an idea *new* to the mind or minds being operated on, is insisted upon irrespective of the said idea, it becomes a dead letter dogma and loses its vitalising power, and serves rather as an obstruction to, than as vehicle of the spirit; but, alas, this insistence upon the letter is too often carried on under the honoured name of "Theosophy."

A man cannot acquire an idea *new to him* unless it *grows* in his mind.

The mere familiarity with the *sound* of a word, or a phrase, or the mere familiarity with the *appearance* of a symbol, does not, of *necessity*, involve the possession of the idea properly associated with the said word, phrase or symbol. To insist, therefore, on the contrary cannot be theosophical; but would be better described as *un*theosophical.

It would certainly be theosophical work to point out kindly and temperately how certain words, phrases and symbols appear to have been misunderstood or misapplied, how various claims and professions may be excessive or confused as a consequence of ignorance or vanity, or both. But it is quite another thing to condemn a man or a body of men *outright*, for certain errors in judgment or action; even though they were the result of vanity, greed or hyprocrisy; indeed such wholesale condemnation would, on the contrary, be untheosophical.

The one eternal, immutable law of life alone can judge and condemn a man absolutely. "Vengeance is *mine,* saith the Lord."

Were I asked how I would dare attempt "to dethrone the gods, overthrow the temple, destroy the law which feeds the priests and props the realm"; I should answer as the Buddha is made to answer in the *Light of Asia*: 'What thou bidst me keep is form which passes while the free truth stands; get thee to thy darkness.'

"What good gift hath my brother but is comes from search and strife (inward) and loving sacrifice."

—*Lucifer*

PROVERBS FROM LUCIFER

The conscience of a man governed by his passions is like the voice of a shipwrecked sailor drowned by the tempest.

If you speak well of yourself you will be distrusted

If you speak evil, you will be taken at your word.

We perceive more readily that anyone is in the wrong, when it is ourselves whom he wrongs.

Our experience consists rather of illusions lost than of wisdom gained.

Do not even think of doing what ought not to be done.

Choose rather to be strong in soul than in body.

Be persuaded that things of a laborious nature contribute more than pleasure to virtue.

Every passion of the soul is most hostile to its salvation.

It is difficult to walk at one and the same time in many paths of life.

Pythagoras said—It is requisite to choose the most excellent life; for custom will make it pleasant. Wealth is an infirm anchor, glory is still more infirm: and in a similar manner the body, dominion, and honour. For all these are imbecile and powerless. What then are powerful anchors? Prudence, magnanimity, fortitude. These no tempest can shake. This is the law of God, that virtue is the only thing that is strong: and that everything else is a trifle.

on the lookout

No "Missing Links"

While the scientfic world is still staunchly Darwinist in its claims about evolution, changes of opinion are going on. Several critics have pointed out the inadequacy of natural selection to account for the emergence of distinct types of species, and last year Dr. Niles Eldredge, of the American Museum of Natural History, called attention to another weakness in Darwinist explanations of the origin of man. His remarks before an audience of science writers were reported in the Nov. 26, 1978, *Manchester Guardian Weekly,* which said in summary:

> According to the accepted view, living things evolve like so many branches of a tree. Genetic mutations occurred. In the rare cases where they gave an advantage to an individual, that individual would thrive and pass on its new characteristic to its decendants. In the many more cases where the change conferred a disadvantage the individual would die. It is not clear whether the whole of this mechanism is challenged by Dr. Niles Eldredge and those for whom he speaks. Probably not. But the smooth transition from one form of life to another which is implied by the theory is, he says, not born out by the facts. The search for "missing links" between various living creatures, like humans and apes, is probably fruitless, he says, because they probably never existed as distinct transitional types.

Not on this Plane

It is still as H.P.B. remarked in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 189) some ninety years ago: "Where the transitional shapes are discoverable we are not told; for the simple reason that no 'missing links' between man and the apes have ever yet been found." She adds: "Nor will they ever be met with; simply, again, because that link which unites man with his real ancestry is searched for on the objective plane and in the material world of forms, whereas it is safely hidden from the microscope and the dissecting knife *within* the animal tabernacle of man himself." Today's scientists, while by

no means ready to accept the conception of astral prototypes for physical development, and the higher designing intelligence involved in the alteration of species (see *S.D.* II, 732), at least now agree that such evidence is lacking on the physical plane. No one, says Dr. Eldredge, "has yet found any evidence of such transitional creatures." As the *Manchester Guardian* report puts it:

> This oddity has been attributed to gaps in the fossil record which gradualists expect to fill when rock strata of the proper age have been found. In the last decade, however, geologists have found rock layers of all divisions of the last 500 million years and no transitional forms were contained in them. If it is not the fossil record which is incomplete then it must be the theory.

Missing from the theory is what H.P.B. identifies as the "Dhyan Chohanic Impulse," which, she says, "constitutes Lamarck's 'inherent and necessary' law of development," which "lies behind all minor agencies" to which the evolutionists refer. (*S.D.* II, 728.)

"The Immortality Principle"

While anthropologists hem and haw and hesitate in the formulation of contemporary theory concerning the origin of man, other branches of scientific inquiry appear to be more daring. An exhibit at the California Museum of Science and Industry (in Los Angeles) during the closing months of 1978 presented a graphic version of "human speculations on the possibility of continuing consciousness." The exhibit was titled "CONTINUUM—the Immortality Principle," and drew on science, philosophy, art, religion, psychiatry, parapsychology, and technology for its displays. Egyptian religion and Greek philosophy figure in these presentations, with quotation from Plato's *Timaeus*. A display titled "New Physics and Consciousness" assembled quotations from leading physicists such as Max Born and Arthur Eddington. Dr. Evan Harris Walker is quoted as saying: "Consciousness may be associated with all quantum mechanical processes. Consciousness may also exist without being associated with a living system." There was a section on "Reincarnation Research," giving a report on the findings of Dr. Ian Stevenson, with numerous quotations from eminent persons who have taken seriously the idea of rebirth.

Clear Affirmations

Toward the end of the book or catalog issued by the sponsors of this exhibition the question is asked: "If you were sure of your

own immortality would you live your life differently?" It seems likely that many minds will be opened by this sort of education made available by a scientific institution. The catalog concludes with affirmations which are headed with the statement: "This has been an interim report—who knows what we will learn tomorrow?" It is then said:

> THE SILENCE OF DEATH IS NO LONGER SO SILENT
> THE MATERIAL WORLD IS NOT SO VERY SOLID
> OUR MINDS ARE NOT PRISONERS WITHIN OUR BODIES
>
> And there is growing evidence from science that life is a continuing process . . . and that consciousness does not die with the body.

Ian Stevenson on Reincarnation

Journalistic treatments of the subject of reincarnation grow increasingly respectful as the years go by. This may be attributed to the fact that more and more people are taking it seriously as an explanation of some of life's mysteries, and by reason of this interest those who have had experiences suggestive of reincarnation are less reluctant to say what they think. Another factor of importance in the spreading interest in rebirth is the scholarly work of Dr. Ian Stevenson, who is chairman of the department of psychiatry in the medical school of the University of Virginia. Dr. Stevenson's books are becoming well known, and he is increasingly sought out by reporters in quest of interesting material. Telling about an interview with this psychiatrist in the *New York Post* for Nov. 18, 1978, a writer, Tom Zito, says:

> While reincarnation conjures up images of quackery to many, the topic does have a history of serious intellectual consideration. Greek philosophers pondered it, Nobel Prize winners studied it, and Darwin pushed the issue into Western thought. In the East, reincarnation is as acceptable as the American Express card.
>
> And even in this great land of cynics, Stevenson is being approached more seriously—both by his colleagues and, more immediately, by the individuals who write him.

Rebirth of the same "Astral Monad"

Dr. Stevenson, this writer says, is "mostly interested in cases involving young children who claim to have had a previous life, especially when the child spontaneously offers evidence of this previous personality in his conversation." Commenting on the

present surge of wondering about former existences, the psychiatrist said to the reporter:

> "Twenty years ago there would never have been an office like this on a campus, and I'm fascinated by the letters of support I get that say: 'I wish I had known about your research years ago. When Billy was 3, he used to prattle on about being a pilot and shot down and now he's 10 and doesn't remember anything!"

The frequency of such reports becomes of particular interest in view of H.P.B.'s statement in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 303) that "save in the case of young children, and of individuals whose lives were violently cut off by some accident, no Spiritual Entity can reincarnate before a period of many centuries has elapsed." In *Isis Unveiled* (I, 351) she gives further explanation of such cases of rapid reincarnation, remarking that the same "astral monad" is reborn after a death by violence. This would perhaps explain the memory of the preceding life on the part of the child, since the astral body is the same. Dr. Stevenson provided another case to the interviewer:

> "My 9-year-old son talks frequently of another life in which he died at the age of 27 in an auto accident," a woman writes from upstate New York. "His description of death and rebirth is matter-of-fact and without dramatics. Until now, I have not encouraged a full discussion of the subject, as I do not know how to handle it. Of his supposed former life, he knows his name, his parents' names and their occupations, where he lived and how he died. His story does not vary except for small details. He insists he was 'told' to choose his father and me as his parents."

Persuasive Evidence

The *Post* writer notes that other professionals working in the field of mind are showing a particular interest in Dr. Stevenson's research. The editor of the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases,* in which several of Stevenson's papers had appeared, said that he received "three or four hundred requests for reprints from scientists in every discipline." The psychiatrist combines a rigorously impartial approach to the possibility of reincarnation, while at the same time recognizing its great potentiality as an explanation of psychological puzzles. He said to the *Post* reporter:

> There are so many features of human behavior that aren't adequately explained by current psychological theories. Child-

hood fears: the fear of airplane motors in one infant, who would be lying out in the sun and become excited and cries when a plane passed overhead; or fear of water, in a baby that would scream and yell when being bathed before it could even speak."

So, one might surmise, one baby had been killed in an airplane crash in a previous life, and the other drowned?

"Not that simple," Stevenson replies, but we can make fascinating correlations. A case I'm studying in Alabama. A young boy 10 or 12 was playing in a house with a friend. The friend pointed a loaded gun at him and shot him accidentally. Another boy born shortly after that named the boy who had shot the other one, described the boy's house and gave an account quite rich in detail of his previous personality."

The persuasiveness of such evidence can hardly be ignored.

Novelists Contribute

How is it that, in a brief hundred years, the conception of rebirth has become so common? At least two factors have been at work. First, there are the egos who have taken birth during the twentieth century—souls who may have had clear recognition of the universal process of rebirth in former lives, and now have little difficulty in bringing this idea through. A further consideration is the spread of Theosophical ideas. Reincarnation is frequently referred to in the literature of recent decades. For example, Thornton Wilder, a novelist who gained fame with *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*—often referred to by students of Theosophy as a study of the workings of Karma—published another novel in 1967, *The Eighth Day,* in which reincarnation is expounded as a teaching by one of the characters. In this scene, two young men who work as orderlies in a large hospital are conversing:

It was Bogardus's day on duty there. He walked back and forth smoking long brown cigarettes. . .

"Trent," he said, "all men lead as many lives as there are sands in the Ganges River."

Roger waited. Finally he had to ask, "What do you mean, Pete?"

"We are born again and again. These three men here—look at them! . . . They will be dead in a few hours . . . they will be born again. And they will be born again hundreds of thousands of times. . . .

Bodhisattvic Ideal

"There's a mighty ladder, boy. In each new life a man may acquire merit that will permit him to step up a rung or two, or

he may fall into error and slip back. Through the merit of Gautama Buddha himself and those who have followed him all men tend to rise. Finally, when they have lived as many lives as the sands of the Ganges, they will arrive at the threshold of supreme happiness. But—now mark my words!—arrived at that threshold, these men will not step over it. They will deny themselves supreme happiness. They will coninue to be reborn. They will choose to wait until all men have reached that threshold—men as numerous as the sands of the Ganges—many of them cruel and wicked men. They move about among us now, in disguise, aiding us to ascend that mighty ladder. But even when all the men on this earth, as many as are the sands of the Ganges, have reached that threshold none of them will step over it into supreme happiness, for there are other inhabited stars, as many as the sands of the Ganges. We must wait until all the men on all the stars have purified themselves. No man can wish to be happy until everyone else in the universe is happy."

Despite what might seem poetic extravagance, the idea of the Promethean or Bodhisattvic sacrifice is clearly conveyed. By such means the idea of the path of Renunciation is helped to become a common intuition of the race.

Return to Consciousness

In an article titled simply "Consciousness" in the *American Psychologist* for last October, Thomas Natsoulas (University of California, Davis) draws attention to the fact that this subject is once again becoming "respectable" for psychologists to consider. After reviewing the identification of Consciousness by William James as a "function of knowing," and then the outlawing of the concept (in 1913) by John B. Watson as leading to "metaphysics," and pointing out that even in 1960 few psychologists dared to "tackle the problem of consciousness," Natsoulas proposes that today Consciousness is returning to "psychological center stage." Yet he is thoroughly aware of the difficulties this subject presents to a scientific approach:

Our question is a thoroughly theoretical one that demands the ultimate—what consciousness really is, once all that pertains to finding out is said and done. To answer it in a fully satisfactory way, without proviso, requires nothing less than an ideal explanatory framework, which of course is not at hand. Somewhere the story is told of Wolfgang Köhler's reply when he was asked for his definition of perception. He said, "If I could give you an answer, my life's work would be over." Köhler might have been speaking for generations of perception psychol-

ogists yet to come. In science, what perception, or consciousness, is cannot be stipulated; it must be found out, and finding out may be a very long process.

What Is Consciousness?

This writer draws on the *Oxford English Dictionary* for a survey of the possible or alternate meanings of consciousness, discussing seven of the definitions offered. Of importance to be noted here, however, is the fact of this open interest in human subjectivity, after so long a neglect. It becomes evident that intelligible discussion of consciousness is hardly possible without at least some metaphysical stipulations, and until they are willing to take some daring steps in this direction, psychologists might do well to use William James's definition that consciousness is a function of knowing, or *the* function of knowing. Meanwhile, Theosophists find help on this question from clear statements in *The Secret Doctrine,* as in the following (I, 328-29):

> To "Spirit" is referable every manifestation of consciousness, reflective or direct, and of *unconscious purposiveness* . . . . There can be no manifestation of Consciousness, semi-consciousness, or even "unconscious purposiveness," except through the vehicle of matter; that is to say, on this our plane, wherein human consciousness *in its normal state* cannot soar beyond what is known as transcendental metaphysics, it is only through some molecular aggregation or fabric that Spirit wells up in a stream of individual or sub-conscious subjectivity.

Requirements of Consciousness

Elsewhere she says:

> Differentiated matter existing in the Solar System (let us not touch the whole Kosmos) in seven different conditions, and Pragna, or the capacity of perception, existing likewise in seven different aspects corresponding to the seven conditions of matter, there must necessarily be seven states of consciousness in man. . . . (II, 597fn.)

And in her statement of the Fundamental Propositions of the *Secret Doctrine* (*S.D.* I, 15) H.P.B. gives the foundation for thinking about this question:

> Apart from Cosmic Substance, Cosmic Ideation could not manifest as individual consciousness, since it is only through a vehicle of matter that consciousness wells up as "I am I," a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal

Mind at a certain stage of complexity. Again, apart from Cosmic Ideation, Cosmic Substance would remain an empty abstraction, and no emergence of consciousness could ensue.

Stages of Development

Finally, the stages of consciousness are related to human development:

> Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya. (I, 40.)

It becomes evident that the conception of Consciousness is essential to a spiritual definition of the human being, and also that metaphysical categories and terms are essential to any comprehensible account of Consciousness. If modern psychologists, as Prof. Natsoulas suggests, are getting ready to pursue serious study of Consciousness, they may eventually discover the need for the intellectual tools that the occult metaphysics provides.

Tomorrow's Psychologists

To accustom themselves to the conditions of this need, they might well return to Williams James, who said in the introduction to his *Psychology: Briefer Course*:

> When, then, we talk of "psychology as a natural science," we must not assume that that means a sort of psychology that stands at last on solid ground. It means just the reverse; it means a psychology particularly fragile, and into which the waters of metaphysical criticism leak at every joint, a psychology all of whose elementary assumptions and data must be reconsidered in wider connections and translated into other terms.
>
> At present psychology is in the condition of physics before Galileo and the laws of motion, of chemistry before Lavoisier and the notion that mass is preserved in all reactions. The Galileo and Lavoisier of psychology will be famous men indeed when they come, as come they surely will, or past successes are no index to the future. When they do come, the necessities of the case will make them "metaphysical."

H.P.B. on "Buddhism"

Theosophia, a quarterly journal edited by Boris de Zirkoff, presents in its issue for last fall a letter by H.P.B. which appeared a hundred years earlier in the Parisian *La Revue Spirite* (October, 1878). In it she corrects what she calls the "hallucinations" of an American contributor to a previous issue of that magazine. Apparently, this writer had said that H.P.B. had embraced the "Buddhist faith." Her comment is illuminating:

> It is true that I regard the philosophy of Gautama Buddha as the most sublime system; the purest, and above all, the most *logical* of all. But the system has been distorted during the centuries by the ambition and fanaticism of the priests and has become a popular religion; the forms and the exoteric or popular cult proceeding from that system, too closely resemble those of the Roman church which has slavishly plagiarized from it, for me ever to be converted to it. Just as in every pure and primitive system, introduced by the great religious reformers of the ancient world, its rays have diverged too far from their common center—*the Vedas of the Aryans;* and although among all modern beliefs the Buddhist Church may be the only one to encourage its members to question its dogmas and to seek the last word of every mystery which is taught therein—I much prefer to hold to the *mother* source rather than to depend upon any of the numerous streams that flow from it.

Faithful to the Buddha's Source

> "Do not believe what I tell you because it is *I,* your Buddha, who says it—but only because your judgment is not opposed to the truth of my assertion"—says Gautama in his *Sutras* or aphorisms. Now although I admire with all my soul the lofty philosophy of Siddhartha, or Sakya-Muni, I bow quite as much before the moral grandeur and the powerful logic of the Hindu Kapila, the great Acharya, who was, however, the most implacable enemy of the Buddha. While the latter looked on the *Vedas* as the supreme authority—the Buddhists rejected them after all, though it was proved, nevertheless, that Gautama in his reform and protest against the abuses of the wily Brahmanas, based himself entirely upon the esoteric meaning of the grand primitive Scriptures. Then, if the reporter—the author of the the article in question—had simply said that I belonged to the religion that had inspired the Buddha, instead of presenting me to the public as a Buddhist turning the *Wheel of the Law*—he would have spoken nothing but the truth. One can be a Platonist without necessarily being a pagan or an idolater at that, as one may remain a Christian without belonging to any of the

> Churches which have been fighting one another for eighteen hundred years in the name of the Man-God.

The translation from the French of this interesting communication by H.P.B. was made by the editor of *Theosophia.*

"With Grace and Dignity"

A reader has called attention to the provisions of the Natural Death Act, passed in 1976 by the California legislature, which gives to the terminally ill the right to choose that their lives should not be artificially prolonged by the application of "life-sustaining procedures." This seems a step in the right direction, correcting one of the most obvious effects of the materialism which pervades modern medicine. The *Journal of Legal Medicine* for January, 1977, reproduces the written directive which a patient may give to his or her physician, stating the conditions under which the patient wishes to have life-sustaining procedures withheld or withdrawn, so that he can "die naturally." (Women carrying children are exempted from this provision during the term of their pregnancy). Commenting on this law, the editor of *Legal Medicine* said:

> Modern medical science, through its "advances," has created the tools to preserve the neurological vegetable, the respirator slave, the victim of brain death. It has also prolonged, perhaps needlessly, the lives of countless terminally ill patients still possessing neurological function, but for whom life has lost any desirable quality. The wise and judicious implementation of this statute, hopefully, will with grace and dignity end such problems.

This restoration of the right of the individual to accept without interference the death that is "certain to all things which are born" seems a part of the general moral awakening now going on.

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